

August 29, 2007

Mr. Philip Isenberg
Chair, Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

Vision Performance Goals and Measurement

Dear Chairman Isenberg:

On behalf of the north/south business and water interests on the Stakeholder Coordination Group, we are following up the May 29, 2007 letter from the full Stakeholder Coordinating Group (SCG) urging expedited, focused technical analyses of "alternative ecosystem strategies." We appreciate your direction to staff to get moving on this right away.

We strongly believe there is a threshold question that must be confronted if we are to truly move beyond crisis management toward a viable, sustainable Delta that can serve the environment and the broader interests of all Californians. That question, simply put, is "What is the vision for the Delta ecosystem?"

Section 1 D of the Governor's executive order reflects the need for this foundational inquiry and provides direction to the Blue Ribbon Task Force to:

Develop a program for sustainable management of the Delta's multiple uses, resources and ecosystem. Sustainable management of the Delta means managing the Delta over the long term to restore and maintain identified functions and values that are determined to be important to the environmental quality of the Delta and the economic and social well being of the people of the state.

Sustainable management requires definition of the functions and values themselves in ways that can be measured and operationalized. While some values, such as water supply quantity, quality and reliability are relatively straightforward to identify and measure, others such as ecosystem health are more subjective. When these functions and values are defined they can serve as performance criteria for assessing alternative visions in development.

As Professor Mount articulated at your May 31st meeting in closing the PPIC panel presentation, the Delta as an ecosystem has been altered beyond all recognition of a "natural" system. Ongoing impacts as a consequence of climate change (both from sea-level rise and changes in hydrology), invasive species, water quality variation, and other factors require a different path than that being driven by the current regulatory regime. A new direction is needed and deciding on the destination is the first step necessary to determine what that direction should be.

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As the PPIC report states:

In a situation such as the Delta, "restoration" means choosing the attributes and organisms regarded as desirable and finding ways to manage the system for desired conditions....[this is] "reconciliation" rather than restoration because the managed system is going to remain human-dominated no matter what. (p.218)

We call on the Task Force to initiate a process to determine the ecosystem goals for such a "reconciliation" and recommendations for changes in the current regulatory regime that will allow them to be achieved in a manner that is most efficient and effective considering the multiplicity of stressors on the system.

This request should in no way be interpreted as a retreat from a commitment to a healthy Delta ecosystem. However, we are also committed to a vision where California's water resources serve multiple needs, including supporting California's economic vitality and agricultural bounty. We do not believe that these goals are mutually exclusive. We do believe that continuing to be constrained by present regulatory drivers and previously established ecosystem goals is more and more untenable.

The time has come to begin a serious scientific and policy discussion to decide what kind of future makes sense for the Delta environment while also meeting California's other critical needs (water supply and quality, infrastructure protection, agricultural sustainability in the Delta and statewide, etc.) We urge you initiate such a process of "reconciliation" now.

To better guide the development and evaluation of visions we urge the Task Force to:

- 1) Define in qualitative terms desirable end states or conditions for the various functions and values deemed important to address in the visions, consistent with overall direction to the Task Force;
- 2) Adopt guiding principles that prioritize these values; and,
- 3) Assess alternative visions and rank them relative to how well these visions address the priority values of the Task Force.

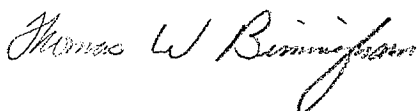
Currently, the Task Force has no systematic framework for defining goals for visions or for evaluating potential visions relative to achievement of desired goals and outcomes. We believe the Task Force should immediately bring definition to its policy objectives and evaluation framework so that a selected vision can logically be linked to goals it is attempting to achieve. In doing this, the Task Force should seek to incorporate the work of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan effort. This exercise will enable the Task Force to objectively evaluate the two proposed visions from the Stakeholder Coordination Group at least at a reconnaissance level of detail. For example, a simple matrix as follows can be constructed that would allow a narrative and quantitative evaluation of the two visions against important criteria established by the BRTF in accordance with guidance given to it.

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Reconnaissance Level Performance Assessment - Delta Vision Alternatives			
Performance Criteria	Existing System	Flexible Delta	Resilient Adaptive Delta
Water Supply and Reliability			
Water Quality			
Ecosystem Restoration Potential			
Seismic Resiliency			
Sea Level Rise Resiliency			
Economics and Cost			

We look forward to further development and evaluation of the Delta Vision alternatives by the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Sincerely,



Thomas W. Birmingham, General Manager
Westlands Water District



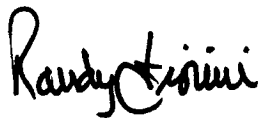
James Levine P.E., Managing Member
Montezuma Wetlands, LLC
& Bay Area Council Director



Joan Anderson Dym, Executive Director
Southern California Water Committee



Daniel Nelson, Executive Director
San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority



Randy Fiorini, President,
Association of California Water Agencies
Board Member, Turlock Irrigation District



Valerie Nera, Policy Advocate
California Chamber of Commerce



Thomas Hurlbutt, Director
Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District



Gary Toeppen, CEO
Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce

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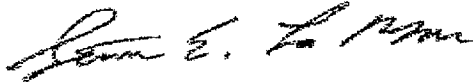
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Jeffrey Kightlinger, General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern CA



Gregory Zlotnick, Special Counsel to the CEO
Santa Clara Valley Water District &
Vice Chair, Bay Area Water Forum



Steve LaMar, Chair
Water Resources Subcommittee of the
California Building Industry Association

cc: Arnold Schwarzenegger, California State Governor
Mike Chrisman, Secretary, California State Resources Agency
Lester Snow, Director, California Department of Water Resources
Ryan Broddrick, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Steve Thompson, Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service CA/NV Operations Office
Kirk Rodgers, Regional Director, USBR Mid-Pacific Region
Russ Strach, Assistant Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service

North/South Business Water Agency Caucus Perspective on
Emerging Delta Visions
8/29/07

This Caucus supports the "Resilient Adaptive Delta" vision discussed in the SCG's Preliminary Recommendations Report for the following reasons:

- It provides the best prospect for restoring water supply availability and reliability while improving ecosystem functions favoring native species
- It is the only proposal likely to be able to successfully address sea level rise and seismic threats to water supply reliability
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force should adopt the "Resilient Adaptive Delta" vision and direct that efforts begin immediately to assess the optimum size, configuration and operating regime of an isolated facility as part of a dual conveyance system, to achieve water supply, water quality and ecosystem goals. This comprehensive analysis should include costs, benefits, impacts, and appropriate mitigation in sufficient detail to support final decision making on changes to the existing conveyance system and pursue permits for their construction and operation.

This caucus supports the development of the middle river conveyance option discussed in the "Flexible Delta" alternative as a near-term action but believes this is only an interim solution for the following reasons:

- Relying on a middle river conveyance only cannot restore water supply sufficiency or reliability – conveyance capability is cut roughly in half from today's capacity.
- Alternately using Old River in addition to Middle river can mitigate some conveyance restrictions but would

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marginalize ecosystem benefits of an Old River system isolated from Project pumping effects.

- The “Flexible Delta” alternative cannot adequately address seismic safety and sea level rise risks to water supply over the long term.

Delta Vision Stakeholder Group members endorsing the above:

Tom Birmingham – Westlands Water District

Joan Dym – Southern California Water Committee

Randy Fiorini – Turlock ID

Tom Hurlbutt – Tulare Lake Water Storage District

Jeff Kightlinger – Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Steve Lamar – Building Industry Association

Valerie Nera – California Chamber of Commerce

Jim Levine – Bay Area Council

Greg Zlotnick – Santa Clara Valley Water District